

BLUE-BEARD;

O R,

FEMALE CURIOSITY!

A DRAMATICK ROMANCE;

FIRST REPRESENTED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY-LANE, ON TUESDAY JANUARY 16TH, 1798.

WRITTEN BY

GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER,

PANDUNTUR PORTÆ.

SACRE

VIRGIL.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON.

PRINTED BY T. WOOLFALL,
FOR MESSRS. CADELL AND DAVIES, IN THE STRAND.

1798.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.]

1728.5.1

do

21 AUGUST 1921

BRITISH LIBRARY



THE following Trifle is not a Translation from the French, nor any other Language:—I have an exclusive right to all it's imperfections.

I am far from endeavouring to vitiate the taste of the Town, and over-run the Stage with Romance, and Legends:—but English Children, both old and young, are disappointed without a Pantomime, at Christmas;—and, a Pantomime not being forth-coming, in Drury-Lane, I was prevail'd upon to make out the subsequent Sketch, expressly for that season, to supply the place of Harlequinade: — Accidents, however, retarded it's representation, a fortnight, beyond it's intended appearance.

I feel

I feel nothing upon my conscience in having substituted a Blue Beard for a Black Face.—I have not attempted to make Magick usurp that Space of the Evening's Entertainment much better occupied by Dramas of instruction, and probability. I have kept my Entertainment within the limits where rational minds, without pedantry, have not only long tolerated it, but have found pleasure in unbending with it, after they have been more solidly engaged. In short, my Syllabub does not make it's appearance until the substantial part of the repast is over.—I am careless, therefore, of those sapient Gentlemen, who, in the words of *Greffet*,

“Portent leur petite sentence”

“Sur la rime, & sur les Auteurs,”

“Avec autant de connoissance”

“Qu'un aveugle en a des couleurs.”

But,

But, I could tell such Gentlemen that I have done some good.—I have given an opportunity to Mr. KELLY of fully establishing his reputation, as a Musical Composer, with a Publick, whose favour he has long, and deservedly experienced as a Singer. Crowded audiences have testified the most strong, and decided approbation of his original Musick, in *Blue-Beard*; and amply applauded his taste, and judgment, in Selection.

Dully as the matter of fact may be stated, I feel gratified in relating this Truism of a worthy and industrious man.

Add to this, I have brought forward *Young Greenwood* (a Scene-Painter of Nineteen!) to shew Design, and Execution of uncommon promise :—

And *Johnstone*, a *Classical* Machinist, (a *rara avis*, alas! in Theatres) has added another wreath to his well-earn'd laurels.

I have

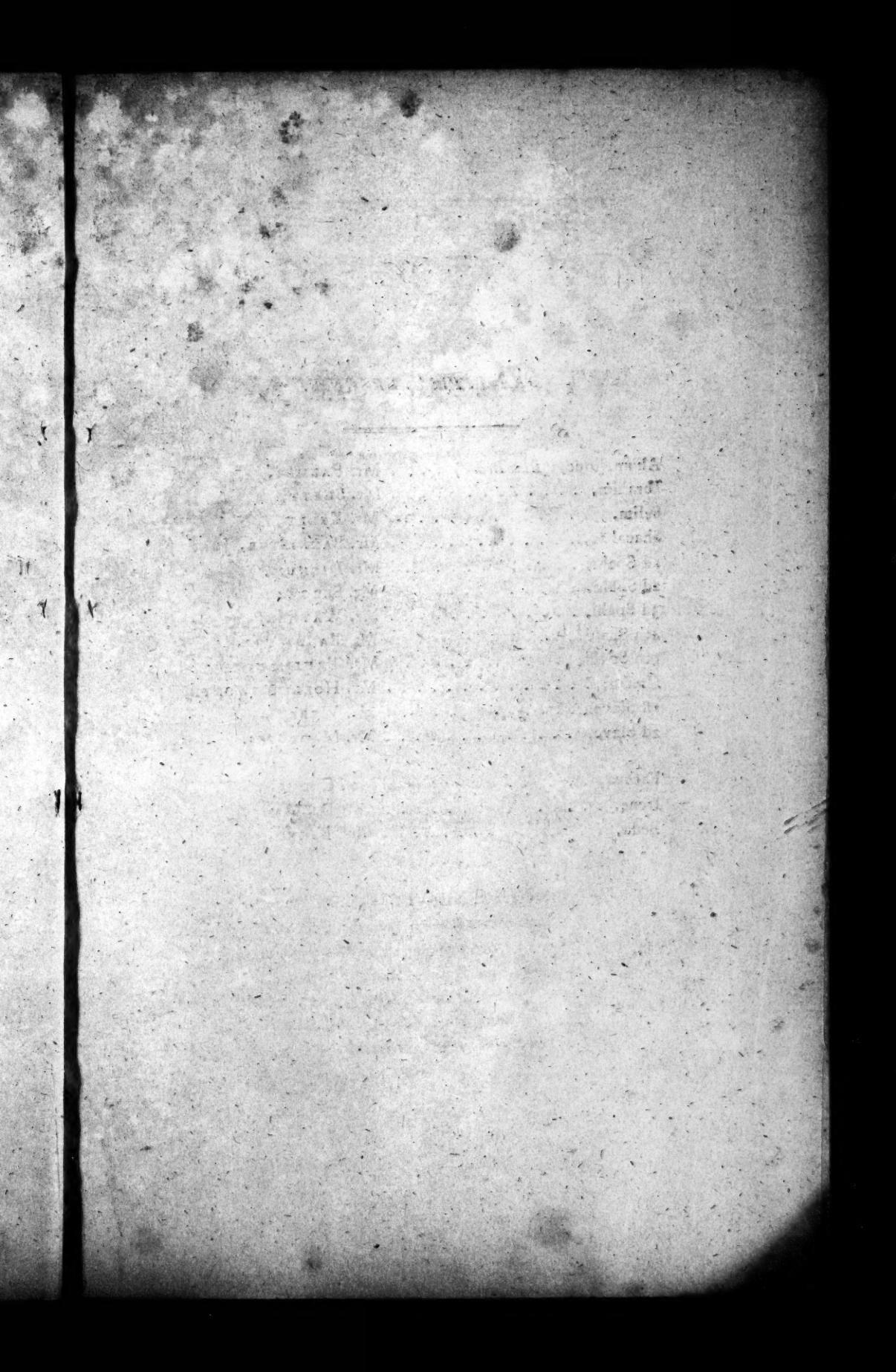
I have made the Dialogue and Songs, (such as they are) subservient to the above-mentioned Artists:—and, no men, surely, ever made better use of a vehicle.

I have only, now, to say that I heartily thank the Performers for the kind, and zealous exertions, of their well-known talents:—and that it would be as ungrateful, as impudent, to deny that I took the outline of my Story from the works of the celebrated Mrs. GOOSE:—at whose feet, with all due deference, I beg to lay my present weighty labour; and I do, hereby, inscribe to her the Grand Dramatick Romance of *Blue-Beard*.

GEORGE COLMAN, the Younger.

Piccadilly, Feb. 2, 1798.

DRA-



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Abomelique, (<i>Blue Beard</i>)	Mr. PALMER,
Ibrahim,	Mr. SUETT,
Selim,	Mr. KELLY,
Shacabac,	Mr. BANNISTER, JUN.
1 st Spahi,	Mr. DIGNUM,
2 ^d Spahi,	Mr. SEDGWICK,
3 ^d Spahi,	Mr. WATHEN,
4 th Spahi,	Mr. BANNISTER,
5 th Spahi,	Mr. TRUEMAN,
Hassan,	Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH,
1 st Slave,	Mr. WEBB,
2 ^d Slave,	Mr. MADDocks.
 Fatima,	Mrs. CROUCH,
Irene,	Miss DE CAMP,
Beda,	Mrs. BLAND,

SCENE--TURKEY.

BLUE-BEARD;

FEMALE CURIOSITY!

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Turkish Village—A Romantick, Mountainous Country beyond it.

SELIM is discovered under FATIMA'S Window, to which a Ladder of Silken Ropes is fastened.

DAWN.

DUET—SELIM AND FATIMA.

SELIM.

T WILIGHT glimmers o'er the Steep:
Fatima! Fatima! wakest thou, dear?
Grey-eyed Morn begins to peep:
Fatima! Fatima! Selim's here!
Here are true-love's cords attaching
To your window.—Lift! Lift!
(Fatima opens the Window.)

B

Fati.

BLUE BEARD.

Fati. Dearest Selim ! I've been watching ;
Yes, I see the filken twist.

Sel. Down, down, down, down, down !
Down the Ladder gently trip ;
Pit a pat, pit a pat,---haste thee, dear !]

Fati. O ! I'm sure my foot will slip !

(With one foot out of the Window.)

Sel. Fatima !

Fati. Well, Selim ?---

Sel. Do not fear !

(She gets upon the Ladder---they keep time in singing to her steps as she descends, towards the end of the last line she reaches the ground, and they embrace.)

Both. Pit a pat, pit a pat, pit a pat,

Pit a pat, pit a pat---Pat, pat, pat.

(As they embrace, Ibrahim puts his head out, from the door of the House.)

Ibra. Ah, Traitors !—Have I caught you !
(comes forward) Attempt to run away with a man ?—and, not only with a man, but a trooper !—One of the Spahis.—Wicked Fatima !—Much as Mahomet's brood must have increased, there isn't one turtle in all our Prophet's pigeon-house, that wouldn't be ready to peck at you. In,—in, and repent ! (pushes her into the house.)

Sel. Hear me, Ibrahim !

Ibra. I won't hear you, as I'm a Mussulman !

Sel. Credit me to suppose that—

Ibra. I won't credit any thing, as I'm a True Believer !

Sel. Did not you promise her to me, in marriage ?

Ibra.

BLUE BEARD.

3

Ibra. Um?—Why, I did say something like getting a licence from the Cadi.

Sel. And, what has made you break your word?

Ibra. A better bridegroom for my daughter.

Sel. Why better than I?

Ibra. He's richer. You have your merits, but he's a Basbaw, with Three Tails.

Sel. Does that make him more deserving?

Ibra. To be sure it does, all the world over. Throw Riches and Power into the scale, and simple Merit soon kicks the beam. Now, to cut the matter short. You're a very pretty Trooper; so troop off: for Abomelique, the great Abomelique, comes, this day, to carry my daughter to his magnificent Castle, and espouse her.

Sel. Abomelique! The pest of all the neighbouring country.

Ibra. Yes, he's by far the best of all the neighbouring country.

Sel. Who deals, as all around declare, in spells and magick.

Ibra. Aye, you can't say of him, as they do of many great folks, that he's no Conjuror.

Sel. And you think this man calculated to make a good husband to Fatima?

Ibra. Positively.

Sel. Better than I?

Ibra. Um—Comparatively.

B 2

Sel.

BLUE BEARD.

Sel. And you now look upon me with contempt?

Ibra. Superlatively, I do, by the Temple of Mecca!

Sel. Now, by my injuries, old man! But I curb my just resentment: You are the Father of my Fatima; but for my rival—

Ibra. He is able enough to maintain his own cause.

Sel. Oh! he shall rue the day when, serpent-like, he stung me. Yes, Abomelique! Spite of thy wealth and power, thy mystick spells, and hellish incantations, a soldier's vengeance shall pursue thee.

QUARTETTO.

Selim, Ibrabim, Fatima and Irene.

Sel. Ruthless tyrant! dread my force!
A soldier's sabre hangs o'er thee!

Thou soon shalt fall a headless corse,
Who now wouldst tear my love from me.

Ibra. How prettily, now, he rails!

But 'tisn't so easily done as said
To smite a Bashaw, and cut off the Head
Of a Man who has got three Tails.

(*Fatima and Irene come from the House, and kneel to Ibrabim.*)

Fati. & Ire. Turn, turn, my Father! Turn thee hither!

A Daughter would thy pity move!

Ire. Why doom the opening Rose to wither?

Both. Why blight the early bud of Love?

Ibra.

BLUE BEARD.

5

Ibra. } O ! how teasing !
Sel. } O ! how trying ! O ! how vexing
Fati. } Are the fears which Fathers
 { Lovers } prove.
 { Daughters }

How distressing ! How perplexing

Are the cares that wait on love !

Ire. & Fati. Hear me ! Hear me !

Ibra. I'll not hear thee !

Ire. & Fati. Can you now our suit refuse ?

Cheer me ! You alone can cheer me---

"Tis a wretched daughter sues.

Ibra. "Tis a silly daughter sues.

All. O ! how trying ! Oh ! how vexing ! &c.

Ire. Dear ! how can you think of marrying
my Sister to this Bashaw ?

Ibra. And pray, good mistress Irene, with all
the submission of a dutiful Father, may I crave
to know your objections ?

Ire. Why, in the first place, then, Father, he
has a Blue Beard.

Ibra. And who, in the name of all the Devils,
made you a judge of beards ?

Ire. Well, I do think it was sent as a punish-
ment to him, on account of all his unfortunate
wives.

Ibra. Ha ! now, under favour, I do think
that a man's wives are punishment enough, in
themselves. Praised be the wholesome law of
Mahomet,

Mahomet, that stinted a Turk to only four at a time !

Ire. The Bashaw had never more than one at a time ; and 'tis whispered that he beheaded the poor souls one after another : for, in spite of his power, there's no preventing talking.

Ibra. That's true, indeed ; and, if cutting off women's heads won't prevent talking, I know of no method likely to prosper ! But, I'll make You silent, Mistress, depend on't. No more of this prate !

Ire. I have done, Father !

Ibra. Prepare to take up your abode with your Sister, at the Castle.

Ire. O, I am very, very glad I am to be with her ! Are not you, Fatima ?

Fati. I am indeed, Irene. A loved Sister's presence will be a consolation to me in my miseries.

Ibra. Perhaps I may contrive to go with you, too. If I could bring it about, I should dwell there in all the respect due to a relation of the mighty Abomelique. Let me once get footing in Old Three-Tails' Castle, and I'll tickle up the Slaves for a great man's Father-in-Law, I'll warrant me ! Hark ! I hear him on the march over the mountain : and here are all my neighbours, pouring out of their houses, to see the procession.

The

BLUE BEARD.

7

The sun rises gradually. A March is heard at a great distance. ABOMELIQUE, and a magnificent train, appear at the top of the Mountain. They descend through a winding path: Sometimes they are lost to the sight, to mark the irregularities of the road. The Musick grows stronger as they approach. At length, ABOMELIQUE's train range themselves on each side of the Stage, and sing the Chorus, as he marches down through their ranks.
The Villagers come from their houses.

G R A N D C H O R U S.

Mark his approach with Thunder ! Strike on the trembling Spheres !

With martial crash,
The Cymbals clash ;
'Tis the Bashaw appears.

War in his eye-ball glistens ! Slave of his lip is Law ;
Our Life, and Death,
Hang on his breath ;---
Hail to the great Bashaw !

Abom. Now, Ibrahim; I come to claim my Bride, the lovely Fatima. To take this village-rose from the obscure and lowly shade, and place her in a warmer soil; where the full Sun of Wealth shall shine upon her, and add a richer glow to the sweet blush of Beauty.

Ibra. Most puissant Bashaw ! I am proud that any twig of mine is thought worthy of a place

place in your Shrubbery. Irene, as you desired, shall go with Fatima, as companion. For myself, mighty Sir, I am a tough Stick, somewhat dry, and a little too old, perhaps, to be moved : but, to say the truth, since you are going to take off my suckers, if I were to be transplanted along with them, I think I should thrive.

Abom. It shall be order'd so.

Ibra. Shall it ! Then, if I don't make shift to flourish, cut me down, and make fire-wood of me.

Abom. Be satisfied, you shall along with us. There shall not be one countenance on which my power, and this day's festival, does not impress a smile.

Sel. That's false, by Mahomet !

Abom. How now ! Who dares utter that ?

Ibra. Hush ! (*Stopping Selim's mouth.*) He's nobody ; only a poor mad Trooper. You may know he's a Trooper by his swearing. Beneath your mighty notice.

Abom. What prompts him to this boldness ?

Sel. Injury. You have basely wrong'd me.

Abom. Rash fool ! know my power, and respect it.

Sel. When Power is respected, it's basis must be Justice. 'Tis then an edifice that gives the humble shelter, and they reverence it. But, 'tis a hated, shallow, fabrick, that rears itself upon oppression :

BLUE BEARD.

oppression: the breath of the discontented swells into a gale around it, 'till it totters.

Abom. Speak, how are you aggrieved?

Fati. Let me inform him.

Ibra. O, plague! Hold your tongue. A woman always makes bad worse.

Abom. Proceed, sweet Fatima!

Fati. I was poor, and happy; for my wishes were lowly as my state. Content, and Peace, dwelt in our Cottage; nor were these smiling inmates ruffled, when Love stole in, and found a shelter in my bosom. My Father placed my hand in this young soldier's, and taught me that our fortunes soon should be united. Poor Selim's soul spoke in his eyes; and mine replied, (for true love's eyes are eloquent) that, through my life, I wished no other protector than a brave youth, whose lot, being humble like my own, the more endeared him to me. Our hopes and joys were ripening daily: You came, and all are blighted! (*falls in Selim's arms.*)

Abom. Tear them asunder. Insulted! and by a Slave that—

(*SELIM offers to draw, and is restrained by ABOME-LIQUE'S Attendants.*)

Thou art beneath my notice. You, Fatima, must to the Castle. Prepare the Palanquin! (*to the Attendants*) We are advanced too far, Lady; we cannot now recede.

(A magnificent Palanquin is brought in, carried by Black Slaves.)

GRAND CHORUS.

Advance!

See us the Bride attending!

Echo shall now the chaunt prolong,

Torn with a lusty Turkish song,
While the Star of the World is ascending.

(ABOMELIQUE leads FATIMA towards the Palanquin.)

Hark to the Drum!

Come, Comrades, Come!

Time will not brook delaying---

(ABOMELIQUE forces FATIMA into the Palanquin, who struggles.)

See she resists---her struggles note!

Sel. & Fati. O give me { her } on whom I dote!
{ him }

(ABOMELIQUE draws his sabre---all the SLAVES draw.)

Sabres are gleaming round the throat
Of beauty disobeying.

[*Exeunt, hurrying off FATIMA. IRENE is seated with her in the Palanquin.*]

SCENE II.

A Hall in Abomelique's Castle.

Enter BEDA, (with a Guitar)

Beda. Where can he be loitering so long!
Why Shacabac! Poor melancholy fool! He's

in some dark corner of the Castle, now, moping and fighing as usual. This is the hour he should come to take his daily lesson with me on the Guitar. Musick is the only thing that makes him merry. Why, Shacabac !

Enter SHACABAC, (*with a Guitar,*)

Shac. Here I am, Beda !

Beda. Why, where have you been, all this time, Shacabac ?

Shac. Getting all in readiness for the Bashaw's return, with his intended Bride. They say she's very handsome. Poor soul ! I pity her.

(*half aside.*)

Beda. Pity a woman because she is handsome ! Pray, then, keep out of my way, for I don't like to be pitied.

Shac. Did I say, Pity ? Oh no, I didn't intend that. Heigho !

Beda. Now what can you be fighing for ?

Shac. That wasn't fighing. I'm like our old blind camel—a little short winded, that's all.

Beda. I'm sure, Shacabac, you ought to be the happiest creature in the Castle. The Bashaw leads you with his favours.

Shac. O, very heavily, indeed ! I don't dispute that.

C 2 *Beda.*

Beda. You are his chief attendant; and he honours you with more employment than all the other slaves put together.

Shac. Works me like a mule! it would be ungrateful to deny it.

Beda. And every body thinks that he trusts you with all his secrets.

Shac. (alarmed) No! Do they think that?

Beda. Yes; and to say truth, you keep them lock'd up as close—

Shac. (starting) Lock'd up! how! why, you—where should I keep them lock'd up?

Beda. In your breast, to be sure.

Shac. Oh! Yes, yes: that is if he trusts me with any: but to think that a Bashaw would tell his secrets to a slave! nonsense!

Beda. Nay, it isn't for nothing he takes you to talk with him, in private, in the Blue Chamber.

Shac. (very earnestly) Don't mention that, Beda! Never mention the Blue Chamber again!

Beda. Why, what harm is there in the Blue Chamber?

Shac. None in the world; but you know I'm full of melancholy fancies: and I never go into that Blue Chamber that I don't feel as if I were tormented with Devils.

Beda. Mercy! What Devils, Shacabac?

Shac.

BLUE BEARD.

13

Shac. (recovering himself, and smiling) Only Blue Devils, Beda! Nothing more. Come, hang Sorrow! Let's strike up a tune, on the Guitar.

Beda. Aye, that makes you merry, at the worst of times.

Shac. That it does, Beda.

D U E T.

Shacabac and Beda.

SHAC.

Yes, Beda,---This, Beda, when I melancholy grow,
This tinking heart-sinking foon can drive away.

BEDA.

When hearing sounds cheering, then we blythe and jolly
grow;

How do you, while to you, Shacabac, I play?
Tink, tinka, tinka, tink---the sweet Guitar shall cheer
you;
Clink, clinka, clinka, clink---So gaily let us sing!

SHAC.

Tink, tinka, tinka, tink---A pleasure 'tis to hear you,
While, neatly, you sweetly, sweetly touch the string!

Both.

Tink, tinka, &c.

SHAC.

Once fighing, sick, dying, Sorrow hanging over me,
Faint, weary, sad, dreary, on the ground I lay;
There moaning, deep groaning, Beda did discover me---

BEDA.

BLUE BEARD.

BEDA.

Strains soothing, Care smoothing, I began to play;
 Tink, tinka, tinka, tink,—the sweet Guitar could cheer
 you;
 Clink, clinka, clinka, clink, so gaily did I sing!

SHAC.

Tink, tinka, tinka, tink,—A pleasure 'twas to hear you,
 While, neatly, you sweetly, sweetly touch'd the string!

BOTH.

Tink, tinka, &c.

(A Horn is sounded without.)

Shac. Hark! the Horn sounds at the Castle
 Gate. The Bashaw is return'd.

Beda. And brings his Bride with him. I long
 to see her! I must join the rest of the slaves
 presently. You know, Shacabac, we are all to
 kneel, and cry "May she live long and happy!"

Shac. Heaven send she may! Hush! The
 Bashaw!

Enter ABOMELIQUE.

Abom. Oh, you are here.

Shac. To obey your pleasure. Your Slave
 humbly trusts that, in preparing for our new
 Mistress, nothing has been neglected.

Abom. I commend your care; and, while the
 lovely Fatima is inspecting her apartments, I have
 employment for you. You must attend me.

Shac. Whither, mighty Sir?*Abom.*

Abom. To the Blue Chamber.

Shac. The Blue Cha—(*drops the Guitar*)

Abom. What ails the driveller?—

Shac. No—Nothing—nothing.—That terrible sound sets me a shivering! (*half aside.*)

Abom. What say you?

Shac. I say the Guitar fell to the ground, and I was afraid of its shivering.

Abom. Attend me.

Shac. I follow.

(*Exit Abomelique, followed by Shacabac.*)

Beda. Poor Shacabac! what can be the matter with him! Perhaps he has been crossed in Love; —and, now I think of it, he must have a mistress some where, or he never would be so often alone with me without saying one tender thing to me. Ah, Love, Love! I shall never forget my poor, dear, lost Caffib.

S O N G.

His sparkling eyes were dark as jet;

Chica, Chica, Chica, Cho.

Can I my comely Turk forget?---

Oh! never, never, never, no!

Did he not watch till Night did fall,

And sail in silence on the Sea;

Did he not climb our sea-girt wall,

To talk so lovingly to me?---

O! his sparkling eyes, &c.

His

BLUE BEARD.

His Lips were of the coral hue,
 His Teeth of ivory so white;
 But he was hurried from my view,
 Who gave to me so much delight!
 And, why should tender Lovers part?
 And why should Fathers cruel be!
 Why bid me banish from my heart
 A heart so full of Love for me!
 O! his sparkling eyes, &c. (Exit.)

SCENE III.

*A Blue Apartment**

A winding Stair case on one side. A Large door in the middle of the Flat. Over the door, a Picture of ABOMELIQUE, kneeling in amorous supplication to a beautiful woman. Other Pictures, and Devices, on Subjects of Love, decorate the Apartment.

ABOMELIQUE and SHACABAC descend the Stair.

(SHACABAC in apparent terror.)

Abom. You know my purpose.

Shac. I guess it.

Abom. Why do you tremble?

Shac.

* The Dialogue of this Scene has undergone some alteration, since it was first represented: by which means the Blue Apartment is not shewn 'till the Second Act. The Author, however, prefers printing it as it was originally written.

Shac. The air of this Apartment chills me ;
and the busines we are going upon isn't the best
to inspire courage.

Abom. Fool ! When this mysterious Portal
shall be open'd, what hast thou to dread ?

Shac. Oh, nothing at all. The inhabitants of
the inner apartment might terrify a man of ten-
der nerves ; but what are they to me ? Only a
few flying Phantoms, fleeting Spectres, skipping
Skeletons, and grinning Ghosts at their gam-
bols : and as to thole who had once the honour
to be your wives, poor souls ! they are harmless
enough, now, whatever they might have been
formerly.

Abom. 'Twas to prevent the harm with which
their conduct threaten'd me, that they have suf-
fer'd. Their crimes were on their heads.

Shac. Then their Crimes were as cleanly taken
off their shoulders as Scimitar could carry them.
That Curiosity should cost so much ! If all wo-
men were to forfeit their heads for being inqui-
tive, what a number of sweet, pretty, female
faces we should lose in the world !

Abom. Such punishment might outrun even
Turkish Justice ; but, in me, 'tis prudence ; Self
preservation.—You are not ignorant of the pre-
diction.

Shac. That it is your fate to marry, and your

Life shall be endangered [by the Curiosity of the woman whom you espouse.

Abom. Thou hast the secret. Dare not to breathe it, or—

Sbac. Don't look so terrible then; for, if you scare away my senses, who knows but the secret may pop out along with them.

Abom. Well, I know thou darest not utter it. The mystick ceremonies, in which, from mere necessity, I have employ'd thee, thou weak and unapt agent! bear in them a supernatural force, fettering thy tongue in silence. (*Gives him a Key decorated with Jewels*) Take the Key: apply it to the door.

Sbac. Yes, I—but I was always, from a boy, the merest bungler at a Lock that—

Abom. Dastard! Thou know'st how readily 'twill open.

Sbac. But, must I once more open it to—

Abom. Be speedy! This Talisman must, ere my marriage rites are solemnized, be placed within the Tomb of those whose rashness has laid them cold beneath the icy hand of Death.

Sbac. Mercy on us! I know not for the icy hand of Death: But if Fear would do me the favour to keep his chilly paws off me, I should be much warmer than I am at present.

Abom. No dallying.

Sbac. I obey.—

SHACABAC puts the Key into the Lock; the Door instantly sinks, with a tremendous crash, and the Blue Chamber appears streaked with vivid streams of Blood. The figures in the Picture, over the door, change their position, and ABOMELIQUE is represented in the action of beheading the Beauty he was, before, supplicating. The Pictures, and Devices of Love, change to subjects of Horror and Death. The interior apartment (which the sinking of the door discovers,) exhibits various Tombs, in a sepulchral building;—in the midst of which ghastly and supernatural forms are seen;—some in motion, some fixed—In the centre, is a large Skeleton, seated on a tomb, (with a Dart in his hand) and, over his head, in characters of Blood, is written

“THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY.”

Abom. Thou seest yon fleshless form,

(pointing to the Skeleton.)

Shac. O, yes!—and my own flesh crawls whenever I look upon him.

(giving Abomelique the Key.)

Abom. Henceforward he must be my destiny. Dæmon of Blood!—(addressing the Skeleton)—Death's Courier!—whose sport it is to sound War's Clarion; to whet the knife of Suicide! to lead the hired Murderer to the Sleeping Babe; and, with a ghastly smile of triumph, to register

the Slaughter'd, who prematurely drop in Nature's Charnel-house; here, here have I pent thee! A prisoner to my Art, here, to circumscribe thy general purposes, for my particular good, twelve winters have I kept thee!

Shac. Have you! Allah preserve us! but I must say that, considering the time, he looks so lean that he does his keeper no credit.

Abom. Approach him with respect.

Shac. Who, I? I'd rather keep at a respectful distance.

Abom. Take this Talisman.

Shac. 'Tis a dagger.

Abom. 'Tis a charmed one. While it remains beneath the foot of that same ghastly form, I am free from mortal power. Another hand than mine must place it there. Thou must perform the office. (*Gives him the Talisman.*)

Shac. Must I! well, I, (*approaching the figure*) O, Mahomet! If ever I get away safe from this gentleman who has jumped out of his Skin, I shall jump out of my own, for joy!—

SHABAC lays the Dagger at the foot of the Skeleton: It Thunders and Lightens violently. The inscription, over the Skeleton's head, changes to the following—

" THIS SEPULCHRE SHALL INCLOSE HER WHO
MAY ENDANGER THE LIFE OF ABOMELI-
QUE"—

The

The Skeleton raises his arm which holds the Dart ; then lets his arm fall again. SHACABAC staggers from the Sepulchre, into the Blue Chamber, and falls on his face ; when the Door, instantly rising, closes the interior building. The streaks of blood vanish from the walls of the Blue Chamber, and ABOMELIQUE's Picture, with the other Pictures, and Devices, resume their original appearance.

Abom. It omens prosperously ! This Sepulchre shall inclose Her who may endanger the Life of Abomelique. Her death then is the penalty of her rashness. May Fatima be prudent, and avoid it. Rouse thee, dull fool ! Thy Task is ended ; arise and follow me hence.

Shac. That I will, if my Legs have power to carry me. (*getting up.*)

Abom. Hark ! I hear a foot in yonder gallery : Ascend the Stairs with me, in silence. Chattering will cost thy Life.

Shac. Then I am sure you must pull out my teeth, for they chatter in spite of me. (*Abomelique makes a sign to him to follow*) I attend !

(*They ascend the Stair-case, and the Scene closes.*)

SCENE IV.

An Apartment in the Castle.

Enter FATIMA and IRENE.

Ire. Prythee, dearest sister, take comfort.

Fati.

Fati. Where shall I find it ? Torn from the man I love, and forced into the arms of one whom I, and all around, detest, where should I look for comfort ! My waking thoughts are torments ; and, since this marriage was proposed, my very dreams have foreboded misery.

SONG.

Fatima.

While, pensive, I thought on my Love,

The Moon, on the Mountain, was bright;

And Philomel, down in the grove,

Broke, sweetly, the silence of Night.

O, I wish'd that the tear-drop would flow !

But I felt too much anguish to weep ;

Till, worn with the weight of my woe,

I sunk on my pillow to sleep.

Methought that my Love, as I lay,

His ringlets all clotted with gore,

In the paleness of Death, seem'd to say,

" Alas ! we must never meet more ! "

" Yes, yes, my belov'd ! we must part ;

" The Steel of my Rival was true ;

" The Assassin has struck on that heart,

" Which beat with such fervour for you."

Ire. Why, to be sure, 'tis a sad thing to lose Selim. He is a good youth. And we women have, somehow, such a pleasure at looking at a good young man, when he happens to be very handsome !

handsome! Yet the Bashaw, bating his Beard, isn't so very ugly neither. Then, you know, he rolls in riches.

Fati. He abuses them, Irene. Wealth, when its purpose is perverted, makes the possessor odious. When virtuous men have gold, they purchase their own happiness, by making others happy: heap treasure on the vicious, they strengthen their injustice with the sweet means of Charity, and turn the poor man's blessing to a curse.

Ire. Well now it's a great pity you happen'd to love Selim first. Who knows but the Bashaw may turn out good to us, after all. See what fine cloaths he has given us already.

Fati. Alas, my sister! these gay trappings communicate no pleasure to an aching heart.

Ire. I wish they could see us in them, in our village, for all that. Then we are to have a fine feast, to night, in honour of your nuptials, which are to take place to-morrow.

Enter SHACABAC.

Shac. Madam, the Bashaw waits, to attend you, to the illuminated Garden.

Ire. There, the illuminated Garden! I told you so.

Fati. I attend him. Come, Sister.

(*Exeunt Fatima and Irene.*)

Shac.

BLUE BEARD.

Shac. Poor soul ! must she be sacrificed, too,
to the Bashaw's cruelty ! His savage spirit settles all family disputes with the edge of the Scimitar.

SONG.

A Fond Husband will, after a conjugal Strife,
Kiss, forgive, weep, and fall on the neck of his Wife.
But Abomelique's wife other conduct may dread--
When he falls on her Neck, 'tis to cut off her Head.

How many there are, when a Wife plays the fool,
Will argue the point with her, calmly, and cool ;
The Bashaw, who don't relish debates of this sort,
Cuts the Woman, as well as the Argument, short.

But, whatever her errors, 'tis mighty unfair
To cut off her Head, just as if 'twere all Hair ;---
For, this truth is maintain'd by Philosophers still,---
That the Hair grows again, but the Head never will.

And, among all the basest, sure he is most base,
Who can view, then demolish, a Woman's sweet face !
Her smiles might the malice of Devils disarm ;
And the Devil take him who would offer her harm.

SCENE

SCENE V.

A Garden, brilliantly and fancifully illuminated. A Fountain playing in the middle of it. An elevated Sopha on one side, under a rich Canop.

A LARGE COMPANY OF SLAVES discovered, some DANCERS, others with Musical Instruments. They all appear as preparing for an Entertainment.

BEDA is foremost among them.

Enter IBRAHIM.

Ibra. That's right! You poor abominable Devils, who have the happiness to be Slaves to my Son-in-law, that's right! Thrum your guitars, puff your trumpets, and blow your flutes, in honour of your new Mistress, my daughter.— Come here, you long-winded dog! (*to a Slave with a trumpet*) Tell me who I am?

Slave. You are old Ibrahim.

Ibra. Old-Ibrahim! These Slaves are remarkably free! I am the Father of the Lady who is to be Wife of the Man who is the Master of you. What a fine thing it is to be Father-in-Law to Three Tails! (*sees Beda*) O, dear! there's a pretty black-eyed girl! Come here, and tell me your name.

Beda. My name is Beda, so please you!

Ibra. Beda, is it? Why, you little Devil, you're an Angel.

E

Beda.

Beda. Oh no, Sir, I'm only one of the family.

Ibra. Then give me a family kiss.—

Beda. Dear! if the Bashaw should see you!

Ibra. Then he'd say you have a good taste.
Cheer up, little one! I rule the roast here. It shan't go worse with you than I have power, and you have charms. It's amazing, when Beauty pleads with a Great Man, how much quicker it rises to promotion than ugly-faced merit. (*A Flourish of Musick without*) Silence! Here comes the great Abomelique! Son-in-law to me, who am the Father to the Lady, who is to marry the man, that is master of you. Stand aside! be ready; Strain your throats, kick your heels, and shew obedience.

ABOMELIQUE enters with FATIMA, IRENE accompanying them. ABOMELIQUE and FATIMA seat themselves under the Canopy.

A GRAND DANCE.

CHORUS.

Lowly we bend in Duty,
Queen of the peaceful Bowers!
We bow to the foot-steps of Beauty;
And strew her path with flowers.
The mellow flute is blowing,
Bounce goes the tambourin;
Sweet harmony is flowing,
To welcome Beauty's Queen:

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A WOOD.

A Company of SPAHIS (or Turkish Soldiers) discovered in Ambush.

GLEE.

STAND close!---Our Comrade is not come:

Ere this he must be hovering near;---

Give him a Signal we are here,

By gently tapping on the Drum.

Rub, Dub, Dub.

A Comrade's wrong'd: Revenge shall work:

Thus till our projects ripe we lurk;---

And still to mark that we are here,

Yet not alarm the distant ear,

With caution, ever and anon,

The Drum we gently tap upon.

Rub, Dub, Dub.

1st Spa. Selim tarries long.

2d Spa. Disappointed Love is a heavy luggage; and he who travels with it generally proceeds slow'y.

3d Spa. Not when the hope of redrefs is pack'd up with i s disappointments: and Revenge has long spurs to quicken a dull motion. Were you ever in love Comrade? (*to a sullen, rough-looking companion.*)

4th Spa. (*very gruffy*) I once knew the tender paffion.

3d Spa. Were you successful when you adored?

4th Spa. Um! Why the chances were against me.

3d Spa. How so?

4th Spa. I adored eleven, and obtained but five.—'Twas hard, for a man who was so constant to'em.

1st Spa. Well, we are all Soldiers. War is the mistress I perfue.

2d Spa. You must take pains to keep sight of her, for you have lost one eye in her service already.

1st Spa. Wounds of honour, brother, form the Warrior's proudest Epitaph. My loss perhaps may live in story.

4th Spa. It must live in a blind story, then, if it live at all, brother.

2d Spa. Come, no more of this.

1st Spa. Nay, let them proceed. They are
only in sport. My Comrades know that the
breath of a few ribald jesters can never wither
the laurels a Soldier gains in prosecuting his coun-
try. Look out! Here comes Selim!

Enter SELIM.

2d Spa. Well met. We have been a full
hour at our post, here.

Sel. Your pardon. The entanglements of the
Wood retarded my progress.

3d Spa. Now, Comrade: The time's at hand
when we will redress you.

Sel. I know your zeal. A Spahi never per-
mits a brother's injuries to remain unrevenged.

4th Spa. We'll seize upon Blue Beard, and
dry-shave him with a two-edged Scimitar.

Sel. If it be expedient to attack the Castle, be
cautious, friends, in the procedure. My Fatima,
else, may fall in the confusion.

2d Spa. Fear not that. We'll crack the walls
like a nut-shell, and extract your mistress, safe
and sound like the kernel.

4th Spa. Our Horses stand a few paces hence.
Let us mount, and away!

Sel. We will, my Comrades! We have some
distance yet to ride, ere we reach the domain of
Abomelique,

Abomelique. Prepare.—I'll follow, instantly,
Thanks for your aid.

1st Spa. Nay, we want no thanks. Men are
unworthy of succour in their own time of need,
who will not be active to relieve the sufferings of
their fellows. March, Comrades!

[*Exeunt Spabis.*

Sel. Now, Fortune! smile upon a Soldier's
honest love, struggling to rescue injured virtue
from oppression.

S O N G.

Selim.

Hear me, O Fortune, hear me!
Thy aid, O let me prove!
Now in this struggle cheer me,
And crown the hopes of Love!

Then Vice no more shall revel;
Yes, Tyrant, we shall meet:
A Soldier's Sword shall level
Oppression at my feet.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Abomelique's Castle.

Enter ABOMELIQUE, FATIMA, and SHACABAC.

Abom. Yes, Fatima; business of import calls
me. For a few hours I leave you. Soon as the
Sun

BLUE BEARD.

31

Sun slopes through the azure vault of Heaven, to kiss the mountain's top, and Evening's lengthen'd shadows forerun the dew-drops of the night, then look for my return. Then shall our marriage be accomplished.

Fati. Alas ! if ever pity——

Abom. No more of this, off with this maiden coyness : and, in my absence be gay and jocund. This Castle can afford diversion, Lady. Rove freely through it. Here are the keys——

Sbac. (*Involuntarily interrupting*) What, *all* the keys ?

Abom. Peace, Slave ! Inspect the rich Apartments. These open every door : This Slave, here, shall conduct you ; but, with them, take this caution.

Fati. A Caution !

Abom. Yes : this Key, sparkling with diamonds, opens a door within the blue apartment.

Sbac. (*figbing*) Oh !

Abom. That Door, and that alone, is sacred. Dare to open it, and the most dreadful punishment that tongue can utter will await you.

(*Here SHACABAC gives ABOMELIQUE a look of supplication for FATIMA, and is repelled by a ferocious frown from his MASTER.*)

It is the sole restraint I ever shall impose. In all else you have ample scope. Merit my indulgence, and tremble to abuse it. (*gives the Keys*)

Fati.

Fati. I tremble now, to hear your words, and mark your manner.

Shac. (aside) So do I, I'm sure!

Fati. If this Key be of such import, 'twere best not to trust it to my keeping.

Shac. Oh, much the best, Pray take it again.
Pray do! (anxiously)

Abom. Be dumb!—No, Fatima. A wife were unworthy of my love, could I not confide in her discretion. Prove I may trust in yours implicitly. Follow me, Slave, to the Castle gate; then hasten back to attend your mistress.

Shac. Yes, I—Pray then don't stir from here till I come, Lady! If the poor soul should get to the Blue Chamber before I return, and—

(aside)

Abom. Farewell, Fatima! Come on. [Exit.

Shac. I come—Oh!—(first looks at FATIMA, idem at his Master, between anxiety for the one and terror of the other: then exit, after ABOMEIQUE.)

Fati. What can this mean? His ferocious look, as he pronounced the solemn charge, struck horror through me! The countenance, too, of the trembling Slave was mark'd with mystery.

Enter IRENE.

Ire. So, Sister! The Bashaw is going, I hear 'till the evening. What are those keys in your hand?

Fati.

Fati. They open every door within the walls.
Abomelique has left them with me, that we may
wander through the Castle.

Ire. Well, now, that is very kind of him.

Fati. I have no joy, now, Irene, in observing
the idle glitter, and luxury of wealth.

Ire. Haven't you? But I have. We'll have a
rare rummage! I won't leave a single nook nor
corner, unexamined.

Fati. That must not be. There is one room
we are forbidden to enter.

Ire. A forbidden room! Dear, now, I had
rather see that room than any other in the Cas-
tle! Did the Bashaw forbid us?

Fati. He did; and with an emphasis so earnest,
a manner so impressive, that he has taught me a
fatal consequence would wait on disobedience.

Ire. Mercy! How I do long to see that room!
Do let me just look at the key.

Fati. Beware, Irene! (*shewing the key.*)

Ire. Dear, there can be no harm in looking at
a key. What, is this it? Well, it is a monstrous
fine one, I declare! Dear Fatima! how pretty
it would be just to take one peep!

Fati. Tempt me not to a breach of faith, Irene.
When we betray the confidence reposed in us, to
gratify our curiosity, a crime is coupled to a fail-
ing, and we employ a vice to feed a weakness.

BLUE BEARD.

The door within the Blue Apartment must remain untouched.

Ire. Well, I have done; but we may see the rest of the rooms, I suppose?

Fati. If that can please you, Sister, I will accompany you.

Ire. That's my good, kind Fatima! If I could but get her by degrees to this Blue Apartment—*(aside)* Come; we'll go, and look over the Castle. I saw some rich dresses, in a wardrobe, at the end of the gallery, that would have suited me, nicely, in the dance last night.

SONG.

Irene.

Moving to the melody of music's note,

Observe the Turkish fair advance;

Lightly as the Gossamer she seems to float,

Thro' mazes of the Dance,

Sportive is the measure,

Thrilling is the pleasure,

While in merry glee, the Sexes join;

Deeper-blushing roses,

Ev'ry cheek discloses,

Eyes with lustre shine.

Moving to the melody, &c.

When the lover takes her glowing hand,

With manly grace and ease,

Can the dancing female, then, withstand

His gentle squeeze?

No

No---She gives him then so languishing a glance,
 Grown tender, soft, and melting with the Dance.
 Cupid, Cupid---God of Hearts,
 Dancing sharpens all your darts!
 Moving to the melody, &c. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

Another Apartment in ABOMELIQUE's Castle.

Enter IBRAHIM, running after BEDA.

Ibra. Come here, you little skipping jade, and let me look at you! (*takes hold of her.*) Tell me now, don't you think you are very pretty?

Beda. I am such as Nature made me, Sir.

Ibra. Nature has been very kind to you, hufsey! She has given you two black eyes.

Beda. That wasn't so very kind of her, Sir.

Ibra. Don't you know I am made Major Domo?

Beda. Yes. The Bashaw has given you the command, it seems, over the slaves.

Ibra. Then obey me.

Beda. How, Sir?

Ibra. How?—Why—Shew your teeth.

Beda. My teeth?

Ibra. Yes.—Giggle.—(*Beda laughs.*) O, Mahomet!—There's ivory!—She has a handsomer

mouth than an elephant!—Where were you born, child?

Beda. In Constantinople, Sir. My poor mother was carried off with a plague, there. My father had it at the same time.

Ibra. Did it kill him then?

Beda. No, Sir : he was very bad with it :—but when my mother died—

Ibra. Then your father got rid of his Plague.

Beda. Yes, Sir.

Ibra. I don't doubt it. And, how came you a slave?

Beda. O, that's a very long story.

Ibra. Don't tell it, then. We've no need of long stories, while there's opium in Turkey :—But I'll lighten the load of your bondage.

Beda. Will you, indeed, Sir?

Ibra. Yes. I am a true Turkish lover.—And know all the amorous phraseology of our country. You shall be the Nutmeg of my affections, my All-spice of delight. When I meet you in the grove of Nightingales, let not your eyes be disdainful as the Stag's. There! Now, go and tell Mustapha to mend the hole the rat gnaw'd in my slipper last night !—in that damn'd cock-lost my Son-in-law crams me into, by way of a bed-chamber.

Beda. Am I to go now, Sir?

Ibra.

Ibra. Aye, Stay! Give me a kiss first. What, you are loth to take it?

Beda. O, Sir, we slaves must take any thing.
(*He kisses her.*)

Ibra. Adieu! Crown of my head!

Beda. Good bye, Sir! An old dotard!

(*Exit BEDA.*)

Ibra. My fortune's made? Abomelique marries my daughter to-night, and puts me into power, because he can't help it.

SONG.

Ibrahim.

I.

Major Domo am I
Of this grand Family;
My word through the Castle prevails:
I'm appointed the Head
That must keep up the dread,
And the pomp, of my Son-in-Law's Tails.
I strut as fine as any Macaw,
I'll change for down my bed of straw,
On perquisites I lay my paw,
I pour wine, flyly, down my maw,
I stuff good victuals in my craw.
'Tis a very fine thing to be Father-in-Law
To a very magnificent three-tail'd Bashaw!

II.

The Slaves, black and white,
Of each Sex own my might;
I command full three hundred and ten.

The

BLUE BEARD.

The Females I'll kiss,
 But it won't be amiss
 To fright them with thumping the Men.
 I strut as fine, &c.

III.

At the Head of Affairs,
 Turn me out, then, who dares---
 Let them prove the Head pilfers and steals:
 No three-tail'd Bashaw,
 Kicks his Father-in-Law,
 And makes his Head take to his Heels.

I strut as fine, &c.

(Exit Ibrahim.)

SCENE IV.

The Blue Apartment.

FATIMA and IRENE are discovered on the Top of the Stair-case.

Fati. I am tired, already, with the search we have made, Irene.

Ire. O, I could never be tired with such fine things as we have seen! Do, now, just come down the stair, and walk through this wing of the building.

Fati. Well, I—

Ire. Aye, now, that's a sweet, good-natured sister! (*they descend the stair*) Now here's a pretty room! All furnished with Blue, I see.

Fati.

Fati. With Blue !—'tis the very chamber we were caution'd to avoid. Imprudent girl !—Whither have you led me ? Haste, haste, Irene, and let us leave it instantly.

Ire. Dear ! where's the hurry ? I'm sure 'tis a very pretty room : Besides, 'tis only the *door* in this room which leads to another, you know, that you were bid not to touch.

Fati. No matter ; 'Tis rash to tarry. Our being here may excite suspicion.

Ire. Suspicion ! Why, we have no bad purpose :—And, even, if we were to open the door—and there it stands, as if it seemed to invite the very key in your hand to come and unlock it. Why I see no such great crime in the action.

Fati. The Bashaw's charge, Irene——

Ire. Is a very ill-natured one. And should you disobey him, we could keep our own counsel. Then if nobody knows we have found out his secret, what have we to fear, while we continue mute as Death ?

A Voice within. Death !—(*the Women look at each other, and tremble.*)

Fati. Did you hear nothing, Irene ?

Ire. Yes.—I—I—I thought I heard something that—Stay.—O, it must be an echo.—These large old buildings are full of them.

Fati. It had an awful sound ! A tone like that, they say, will sail upon the flagged wing

of

BLUE BEARD.

of midnight, crossing the fear-struck traveller upon the desert, to give him token of a foul murder.

(A deep groan is heard from the interior apartment.)

Fati. O, Heaven have mercy!—What can this mean?

Ire. I know not! It seems the accent of distress. If so, it were humanity to succour the wretched soul who breathes it.

Fati. Humanity alone, my sister, could induce me to penetrate the mystery this Portal, here, incloses.

Ire. No eye can see us!

D U E T.

Fatima and Irene.

All is hush'd! No footstep falls!
And Silence reigns within the Walls!
The place invites; the Door is near;
The Time is apt—The Key is here,
Say shall we? Yes. Say shall we? No!
What is it makes us tremble so!

Mischief is not our intent;
Then wherefore fear we should repent?
Say shall we? Yes. The Door is near.
Say shall we? Yes. The Key is here.

At the end of the Duet, *FATIMA* puts the Key in the Door, which sinks, and discovers the interior Apartment,

Apartment, as at first represented—The inscription over the Skeleton's head, is, now,

“THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY.”

The Blue Chamber undergoes the same change, as in the first instance. The WOMEN shriek, and run to each other, and hide their heads in each others bosom:—At this moment SHACABAC appears at the top of the Stair-case:—then runs down hastily. As he descends, the Door rises, and the Chamber resumes it's original appearance.

Shac. (speaking as descending) O, 'tis as I fear'd! —This comes of her not waiting for me.—She knows the secret, and she dies! O, Lady! what have you done?—

Fati. Begone! You knew of this. Your look, when late Abomelique left me, now is explained. You are an accomplice in this bloody business.

Shac. I!

Fati. My Death, no doubt, is certain; and, in you, perhaps, I see my executioner.

Shac. How a man's looks may belye him!— This comes now, of my being such an ugly dog! I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head to be made a Sultan.

Fati. Prove it, then, by saving us.

Shac. How?

Ire. Conduct us from the Castle.

BLUE BEARD.

Shac. Impossible. The outward Gates are closely guarded.

Fati. Nay, nay, you do not pity us.

Shac. Not pity you! Oh! he must have a hard heart to see a lovely woman in extremity and not try to soften her distress. Stay! Perhaps we may conceal the—Where's the Key?

Ire. It fell upon the ground and—

Shac. The ground!—Aye—Here—Perhaps we may be able to—(*taking it up*) Nay, then, every hope is lost! The key is broke!

Fati. All is discover'd then!

Ire. Certain. O, Fatima! would the Bashaw had any humanity within his breast, and that fatal Key could unlock it!

Shac. O, would he had! I'd stuff the Key down his throat, as soon as he came home, to get at it—

(*The Horn of the Castle is sounded.*)

There! The Bashaw returned!—full six hours before his time!

Ire. O Heaven! what are we to do?

Fati. I am reckless of the future. Perhaps 'twere better I should die! 'Twill end a Life, which promised nought but misery.

Ire. Die! Oh, Sister! (*embracing her.*)

Shac. Do not weep! do not weep! I'm almost distracted—Hurry hence—come, Lady!—meet him as if nothing had happen'd—Collect

your

your spirits,—Smooth your looks.—This way, now!—O, if choaking can save your life, my sorrow for you bids fair to preserve it. Come, Lady, come! (Exeunt, up Stair-case.)

SCENE V.

Another Apartment in the Castle.

Enter SHACABAC—looking behind him as he enters:

Shac. I have left them on the top of the Stair, that I may avoid observation. If they get far enough from the Blue Chamber before inquiry is made for them, they may conceal the——

Enter HASSAN. (*Shacabac runs against him.*)

Shac. Umph!—Who's that?!

Haf. Hassan, the black Eunuch.

Shac. Whether are you going?

Haf. To seek the Lady Fatima, by the Bas-haw's order.

Shac. Are you? If he meets them so near the fatal Chamber, and mentions it to the Bas-haw, they are lost. I must detain him.—I—Hassan!—I say, Hassan—How d'ye do, Hassan?

Haf. I'm well, I thank you, Shacabac.

Shac. Well, are you? Are you sure you are well?

Haf. Very well.

Shac. Very well?—Very well, I'm glad of it. So am I, thank you, Haffan. That is, I'm tolerable as the time goes. But you had never the kindness to ask me;—Me, your fellow Slave! Pray, now, do ask me: Do,—for that will take upa little time. (*aside.*)

Haf. Why then, how dy'e do, Shacabac?

Shac. Very ill indeed, Haffan! Only feel my pulse. Count it 'till it beats just one hundred and twenty. Twice sixty seconds will delay him about two minutes. (*aside.*)

Haf. I don't know how to count, Shacabac.

Shac. Don't you? Why not?

Haf. I can't read.

Shac. That's a good reasen. I should think, ere this, they are far enough from the Blue Chamber to—A little longer to make all sure. (*aside.*) I have been thinking, Haffan, why you and I shoule be of different colours.

Haf. Fortune has disposed it so—She has made me black, and you white;—but dont't let that mortify you.

Shac. It shan't. But, as you say, Haffan, Fortune will make men of different shades.—Fortune's chequer'd:—and she chequers men alternately—black and white—like the Squares in the Bashaw's Chess Board.—When I think how much Fortune is chequer'd, I think—I think that

that—I think I have almost kept you long enough for my purpose. (*aside.*) What are the Bashaw's orders to the Lady Fatima?

Haf. That she must attend him, instantly, in the Garden.

Sbac. In the Garden?—Was that the command, Haffan?

Haf. It was, Shacabac.

Shac. Then I'll tell you what, Haffan—if ever the Master of the Slaves gave you a sound drubbing, for staying so long on a message, you'll get one now.

Haf. Why have you delay'd me, then?

Sbac. I! You have delay'd me. You have a brain for business, Haffan:—but, whenever you meet any one in your way, you will stop, and gabble. That's your fault—Away!

Haf. I'll go find her. (*Exit Haffan.*)

Sbac. And I'll to the Garden, to watch her interview with the Bashaw: and weak as my means are, I'll catch at every straw to preserve her! (*Exit Sbacabac.*)

SCENE VI.

A Garden.—In the back of which is a part of Abomelique's Castle, and a Draw-bridge leading to the Castle Gate.—A Corridor before the Apartments on the first story.—A Door beneath it.—A Turret on the top of the Building overlooking the Country.

Enter ABOMEIQUE, and a SLAVE.

Abom. Is Fatima inform'd I wait her presence here?

Slave. Hassan, by your command—She comes.

Enter FATIMA.

Abom. Leave us.

(*Exit Slave.*)

Fati. (*in apparent confusion*) This speedy return I—I look'd not for.

Abom. I had accounts to settle,—with Traders, Merchants from Gallipoli: But when worldly business draws men abroad who leave their hearts at home, then, Fatima, Love's wings give swiftness to the leaden hours of dull negociation; and the mercurial spirit of an enamour'd mind, consolidates a volume, ere Commerce, dozing o'er his Day-book, can plod a page. How have your hours

hours pass'd in my absence? Have you view'd
the Castle?

Fati. I have, Sir.

Abom. Well, saw you aught worthy your in-
spection?

Fati. Worthy, Sir?

Abom. Aye, worthy—There are sights here,
perhaps, that common eyes ne'er look'd upon.

Fati. There are indeed!

Abom. Now, please you, give me back the
Keys.

Fati. They are here. (*delivers them in great
agitation.*)

Abom. How now?—You tremble!

Fati. Tremble, Sir!—Why should I?

Abom. You best can answer that. Sometimes,
Lady, 'twill betray Guilt.

Fati. And know You, then, no instance where
the Guilty do not betray themselves by trembling?

Abom. Umph!—I comprehend not that. One
Key is wanting! where is it? (*sternly*)

Fati. I have it.

Abom. Give it me.

Fati. Be not impatient, 'Tis in my pocket.

Abom. Produce it.

Fati. I shall—but, by mere accident, you see
'tis broken, (*gives it.*)

Abom.

Abom. Damnation!—Lady, this Key is Charm-fraught? forged in a sulphurous Cave, within whose blood-besprinkled mouth nothing but Witchcraft enters, to celebrate her frantick revels. This speaks a damning proof against you, and you die! (*Draws his Scimitar and holds it over her head.—She falls on her Knees.*)

Fati. Oh, Spare me! Spare me!—If ever I approach'd the door but to—

Abom. No protestations! (*going to strike*)

Fati. Beseech you, hold!—Alas! if I must die, grant me some little time for preparation.

Abom. (*After a short pause*)—Well,—be it so. Yonder's your chamber. (*pointing to an Apartment within the Corridor*) Thither instantly: soon expect me there—then to expiate your crime by Death.—Before me to the Castle!

[*Exit FATIMA through the door under the Corridor.*

ABOMELIQUE following her with his drawn Scimitar.]

(Enter SHACABAC, on the opposite side.)

Shac. Allah preserve her, poor soul! But I fear she goes to certain Death! O that I were able to save her! Are there no means to—This hellish Abomelique whips off women's heads

BLUE BEARD.

49

heads as if they were a parcel of buttons.—Let me listen.

(FATIMA comes from her Apartment, upon the Corridor)

Hist! Lady! Lady Fatima!

Fati. O get you hence, good fellow! Your anxiety may make you a sharer with me, in the Bashaw's resentment.

Shac. Where is he?

Fati. I expect him instantly to ascend the Stair, and execute his dreadful purpose.

Shac. O, Mahomet, holy Prophet! if ever you break a Bashaw's neck over a Stair-case, now's your time!

Fati. Hark! I hear him! No,

IRENE appears at the Top of the Turret.

Ire. Sister! Sister Fatima!

Fati. Irene! Is it you?—O, Sister, fare you well! I die a cruel death!—

Ire. My heart bleeds for you!

Shac. So does mine, I'm sure!

Ire. Should Travellers appear, I'll call to them to succour us.

Abom. (Calling from FATIMA's Apartment.) Fatima!

H

Fati.

Fati. O, Heaven ! he has entered the Apartment !

Abom. (*Without*) Why Fatima !

Sbac. 'Tis he ! (*retires under the Corridor.*)

Fati. One moment, I beseech you ! I have but one poor prayer to offer up to heaven, and then I come.—Is there no help !

Q U A R T E T T O.

Abomelique, Fatima, Irene, Shacabae.

Fati. Look from the Turret, sister dear !

And see if succour be not near.—

O tell me what do you descry ?

Ire. Nothing but dreary Land and Sky.

Fati. { Alas ! Alas ! then { I,
Ire. { You, } must die !
Sbac. { She,

Abom. Prepare.—*Fati.*—He calls ; Look out, again ; Look out, look out across the plain !

Ah me ! does nothing meet your eyes ?

Ire. I see a Cloud of Dust arise.

Fati. { That Cloud of Dust a hope supplies !
Ire. {
Sbac. {

Abom. No more delay.

Fati. A moment stay !

Fati. Succour ! or my existence ends !

Ire. A Troop of Horsemen this way bends.

Fati. { Then Heaven grant they may be Friends !
Ire. {
Sbac. {

Fati.

BLUE BEARD.

51

Fati. O, watch the Travellers, my Sister dear !

Ire. I'll wave my handkerchief, 'twill draw them near.

Sbac. They'll see it speedily and hurry here,

Abom. Prepare !

Ire. { I see them galloping, they're spurring on amain !

Sbac. } Now faster galloping, they skim along the plain !

Abom. No more delay,

Fati. A moment stay !

Fati.

Ire.

Sbac.

} They come.

Abom. Prepare !

Fati.

Ire.

Sbac.

} They'll be too late !

Now they dismount !---They're at the Gate !

Abom. Prepare !

ABOMELIQUE, as they finish the Quartetto, rushes from the Apartment upon the Corridor, seizes FATIMA, and is upon the point of beheading her, when SELIM and his Companions having crossed the Drawbridge, sound the Horn loudly at the Gate.—**ABOMELIQUE**, alarmed at the Noise, retires hastily, dragging FATIMA into the Apartment.

— (SHACABAG comes from under the Corridor.)

Shac. (to Selim, who is on the Drawbridge.)

You'll get no entrance there.

Sel. Say, where is Fatima !

Shac.

BLUE BEARD.

Shac. Trembling under the Bashaw's clutches.

Sel. We force the Gate, then.

Shac. 'Tis impossible. Get round to the Eastern Battlement; we are weakest there.—Away! and success attend you!

Sel. To judge from your conduct, you should be a friend. What are you?

Shac. What every man should be—a Friend to Virtue in distress wherever I meet it. Away, or you will be too late.

Sel. Come, Comrades!—be firm!—fight lustily. Quick, March!

(They hurry from the Bridge to quick Martial Musick.)

[Exit *Shacabac.*]

SCENE VII.

An Apartment in the Castle.

ALARUMS, SHOUTS, &c.

Enter A BODY OF SLAVES.

1st Slave. We are attack'd.—Up to the Ramps.—Where is Ibrahim, our Leader?

2d Slave. He's no where to be found.

1st Slave.

1st Slave.—We must begin without him, then.
It is the Bashaw's order.—Follow!—

[*Exeunt Slaves.*

[*Shouts without.*

Enter IBRAHIM.

Ibra. Mercy on me! I quake in my cloaths like a cold jelly in a bag! They are battering the Castle to pieces. I am the unluckiest Musulman in all Turkey! Here's a building that has stood wind and weather this age, and, the moment I pop my nose into it, it begins tumbling about my ears. (Shouts.)

A cry of To Arms! To Arms.

To Arms! O, dear! I had much rather to Legs, if I knew which way to escape. Now shall I be expected to put myself in the front of the ranks, because I am *Major-Domo*;—but, if I do, I'll give them leave to mince the *Major-Domo* for his Son-in-Law's supper. (*Alarum.*)

Enter 1st SLAVE.

O Mahomet! what's that?

1st Slave. An Enemy is on the Walls.

Ibra. Then, you cowardly rascal, do you go and knock him into the ditch.

1st Slave.

1st Slave. We wait for you. You are appointed our Leader. There is no discipline without you. We want a Head.

Ibra. Do you? So shall I, if I go with you. Get on before—Tell 'em to fight like fury; and I'll be with them to reward their valour, when it's all over. Run that way, that leads into the action.

1st Slave. I will.

[*Exit Slave.*

Ibra. And I'll run this way, that leads out of it.

[*Exit.*

(*Shouts, Alarums, &c.*)

SCENE LAST.

The Inside of the Sepulchre.

The inscription over the Skeleton's head is now,—

“ THIS SEPULCHRE SHALL INCLOSE HER WHO
MAY ENDANGER THE LIFE OF ABOMELIQUE.”

(*The Shouts and Alarums continue.*)

Enter ABOMELIQUE with his Scimitar drawn, dragging in FATIMA.

Abom. On every side it rages: The Slaves give way. You still are in my power. You Sorceress,

Sorceress, have led me to the toil! Your Death will extricate me—Meet it then here:—Here, in the Sepulchre, which you have violated.

Fati. Nay take me hence. Let me not perish in this abode of horror!

Abom. Thy prayers are in vain.—

As he raises his Scimitar to strike, a near attack is heard, and a violent crash in the building: Part of the wall, in the back of the Sepulchre, towards the roof, is beat down, and SELIM appears in the Aperture.

Sel. Hold Ruffian! hold thy arm!

Fati. Oh, Selim!

Abom. Rash fool! I know thee and thy purpose. Thy presence, now, swells the full tide of my resentment, and gives a higher zest to vengeance. Know the decrees of Destiny, and curse thy weakness which would counteract it. "This Sepulchre shall inclose Her who shall endanger the Life of Abomelique." This wretch, here, has endanger'd it—This Sepulchre incloses her, and—

Sel. But not in Death: Tyrant, thy hell-born spells promise not that.

Abom. Does my Fate juggle with me, then!—Hold—No, yon dagger is my safe-guard, (pointing

*ing to the Talisman) 'till mortal hands can reach it.
Weak boy! Despair, and see her die.*

*Fati. While Selim lives, so near me too, my
life is precious, and I struggle to preserve it.*

*She struggles with ABOMELIQUE, who attempts to kill
her; and, in the struggle, snatches the Dagger
from the pedestal of the Skeleton. The Skeleton
rises on his feet, lifts his arm which holds the
Dart, and keeps it suspended. At that instant the
entire wall of the Sepulchre falls to pieces, and
SELIM to the ground. Behind, among fragments
of the building, a body of SPAHIS is discovered,
on foot, with ABOMELIQUE's SLAVES under their
Sabres, in postures of submission, and further back
is seen a large Troop of Horse—The neighbouring
country terminates the view.*

SELIM advances towards ABOMELIQUE.

Sel. Now turn thee hither!

*Abom. Baffled! I still have mortal means, and
thus I use them.*

*SELIM and ABOMELIQUE fight with Scimitars.—
During the Combat, Enter IRENE and SHACABAC.
After a hard contest, SELIM overthrows ABOME-
LIQUE at the foot of the Skeleton. The Skeleton
instantly plunges the Dart, which he held sus-
pended*

pended, into the Breast of ABOMELIQUE, and sinks with him beneath the earth.—(A volume of Flame arises, and the earth closes.)

SELIM and FATIMA embrace.

Sbac. Huzza!—If ever the Bashaw was in fit company, he has got into it now.

Fati. Oh, Selim!

Sel. Thus safe, at last, I clasp thee!

Ire. Joy, joy, my Sister! we have conquer'd.

Fati. Where is my father?—

Sbac. Hid in the dust-hole—when the noise is over, we may chance to get sight of him.

Sel. All shall be explained: Our Marriage now, my Fatima, may meet his sanction. And you, my honest fellow, must not go unrewarded (*to Sbacabac*)—Thanks, my brave Comrades!—

SPAHS and SLAVES come forward.

We are victors—and in the countenance, here, of every Slave I see a smile imprest, which betokens joy, in having lost a Tyrant.

Slaves. Thanks to our Deliverer!

Sel. Come, Fatima, Let us away from this rude scene of horror: and bless the Providence which nerves the arm of Virtue to humble Vice, and Oppression.

I

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Monsters of Hell, and Noxious Night,
Howl your Songs of wild delight!
To your gloomy Caves descending,
His career of Murder ending,
Now the Tyrant's Spirit flies:
Bathed in a flood
Of guilty Blood,
He dies! He dies!

How great is the transport, the joy how complete,
When, raised from Despair, thus Love's votaries meet!
Sweet the delight that Lovers prove!
Sweet, when Fortune, tired of frowning,
Hymen comes, with pleasure crowning
Happy Love!

4 AP 54

THE END.

